

VZCZCXRO4754  
RR RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHNC #0047/01 0260644  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 260644Z JAN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9527  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1323  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NICOSIA 000047

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UNFICYP](#) [CY](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: CYPRUS: OPPOSITION LEADER CRITICIZES CHRISTOFIAS,  
TALAT

REF: A. NICOSIA 28  
[1](#)B. NICOSIA 36  
[1](#)C. NICOSIA 46

Classified By: Ambassador Frank C. Urbancic, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The continued demonization of the 2004 Annan Plan had precluded greater progress in the Cyprus settlement talks, opposition DISY leader Nikos Anastassiades told visiting EUR DAS Matthew Bryza on January 14. G/Cs' determination to keep the compromise Plan off the table had resulted in Turkish Cypriots tabling extreme positions, with his side obliged to oppose them and criticize T/C intransigence. President Demetris Christofias was mishandling the negotiations, Anastassiades argued, playing to the hard-liners and not acknowledging the support and contributions of DISY. While criticizing his own compatriots, the opposition leader also took shots at Turkey and T/C leader Mehmet Ali Talat, questioning the former's commitment to a solution and the latter's desire for confederation over federation. Finally, Anastassiades requested greater international community involvement than Christofias seems prepared to countenance, especially in the talks' crucial give-and-take phase. END SUMMARY.

-----  
Never at a Loss for Words  
-----

[1](#)2. (C) Anastassiades rearranged his January 14 schedule to accommodate a brief January 14 meeting with visiting EUR Deputy Assistant Secretary Matthew Bryza, which focused solely on progress in the Cyprus settlement talks. The irascible DISY (G/C opposition) leader voiced great pessimism over the course of the negotiations. Two factors lay primarily to blame, one of the Greek Cypriots' own making. The continued demonization of the Annan Plan, both by hard-line disciples of the recently-deceased former President Tassos Papadopoulos and by Christofias himself, had closed off useful avenues of negotiation, Anastassiades asserted. It was obvious that in rubbishing the compromise Plan, the G/Cs would invite harder-line opening positions by the Turkish Cypriots.

[1](#)3. (C) In announcing recently that four months' negotiations had delivered little or no substantive progress, Christofias was playing to the nationalist crowd, Anastassiades thought, which was a big mistake. Such tactics not only questioned the performance of the UN and the bona fides of Turkish Cypriots, they actually were preparing the G/C side for failure of the talks. The DISY leader did not doubt Christofias's deeply-held commitment to reaching a deal, but he did question his tactical smarts. As proof, he pointed to the administration's flat-out refusal to reference the Annan Plan in a comparison of G/C, T/C, and Annan Plan positions on Governance, an assessment that DISY was demanding.

-----  
Blasting Both Sides of the Green Line  
-----

¶4. (C) Mehmet Ali Talat too deserved blame, of course. The DISY leader, who regularly engaged Talat, claimed the T/C leader's positions on Governance looked more confederal than federal. Meriting special criticism were the T/C demands for numerical equality within the executive, and constituent state treaty-making powers that far exceeded the "traditional" areas of commerce, sports/culture, and education. Christofias and G/Cs had no option but to oppose all.

¶5. (C) Greek Cypriots by nature question Talat's negotiating autonomy, and the more-serious-than-most Anastassiades was no exception. Via his reading of Turkish media and his contacts with Turkish Cypriots, he doubted the T/C leader actually enjoyed much negotiating room. Had the Turkish Army given PM Erdogan space on Cyprus? he inquired of Bryza. And how would the Turks react to the calling of early "parliamentary" elections in the north? Anastassiades saw an opposition UBP victory greatly injurious to the process.

-----  
He Seems to Have Some Room  
-----

¶6. (C) Bryza responded with his impressions of his visit so far. Comparing this trip to the island to his last in July 2006, the atmospherics were far better, and he held out hope for significant progress in the future talks. While Turkish Cypriot positions clearly differed from G/Cs' on the details, he saw no indication the T/Cs were pursuing anything other than a bizonal, bicomunal federation. Mainland interlocutors had assured Bryza that Talat was free to

NICOSIA 00000047 002 OF 002

negotiate Governance and other chapters as he saw fit, and Bryza had seen nothing so far to put their assurances in doubt. Greek Cypriots recently had put forward a seemingly creative, mutually-agreeable proposal on judicial and legislative deadlock breaking mechanisms, and as proof of T/Cs' commitment, he hoped they would give it serious consideration.

¶7. (C) Bryza expected the Turks to become more involved once the negotiations moved to Security and Guarantees, owing both to their troop presence on the island and their status as guarantor powers under the 1960 founding treaties. As to greater involvement by the U.S. and/or broader international community, that would depend on the expression of interest of the two leaders. The U.S. stood ready to use its good offices to further the process in any way, Bryza clarified.

¶8. (U) DAS Bryza has cleared this cable.  
Urbancic